From boats to antimatter

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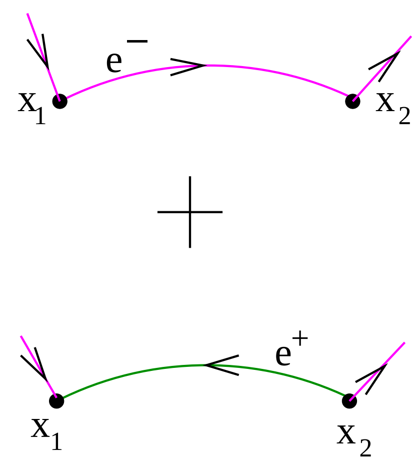


Two concepts crucial to particle physics

- Relativity: $v < c$
- Quantum mechanics: particles are waves

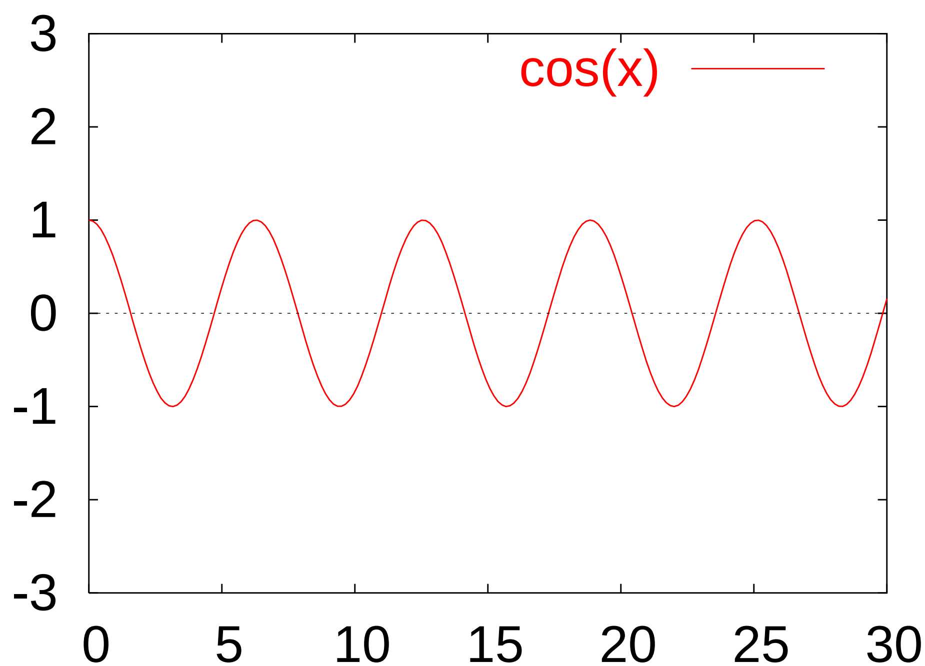
In particle physics these unite with a vengeance

- "quantum field theory"
- predicts "anti-matter"

Really a talk about some neat properties of waves

- consequences for boats as well as antimatter!

Prototype wave $\psi(x) = \cos(x)$



Examples

- water: $\psi(x)$ = water height
- sound: $\psi(x)$ = air pressure
- light: $\psi(x)$ = electric field
- electron: $\psi(x)$ = "wave function"

Quantum mechanics:

- probability for electron at location x
  - $P(x) \sim |\psi(x)|^2$

Let the wave move

- $\psi(x) = \cos(x) \rightarrow \psi(x,t) = \cos(kx - \omega t)$
- $k =$ "wavenumber"
  - controls the wavelength ($\lambda = \frac{2\pi}{k}$)
- $\omega =$ "frequency" in radians per second
  - ($\frac{\omega}{2\pi}$ cycles per second)

Prototype wave:

- $\psi(x,t) = \cos(kx - \omega t)$

Velocity

- cosine maximum when $kx - \omega t = 0$
- $x = \frac{\omega}{k} t = vt$
- $\boxed{v_p = \frac{\omega}{k} = \text{"phase velocity"}}$

Quantum mechanics

Particle of energy E and momentum p

- really a wave
- frequency $\omega = \frac{E}{\hbar}$
- wave number $k = \frac{p}{\hbar}$

Planck's constant $\hbar = 1.055 \times 10^{-34}$ Joule seconds

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- electron frequency 10^{21} radians/sec

Equivalences:

- high frequency
- high energy
- short wavelength

Need big accelerators to study small things

Relativity

Relates energy and momentum to velocity

- $E = \frac{mc^2}{\sqrt{1 - v^2/c^2}}$
- $p = \frac{mv}{\sqrt{1 - v^2/c^2}}$

- $E = mc^2 + \frac{1}{2}mv^2 + \frac{1}{8}m\frac{v^4}{c^2} + \dots$

Einstein rest energy + Newton + corrections

Put it all together

- $v_p = \frac{\omega}{k} = \frac{E}{p} = \frac{c^2}{v} = c \times \left(\frac{c}{v}\right) > c$

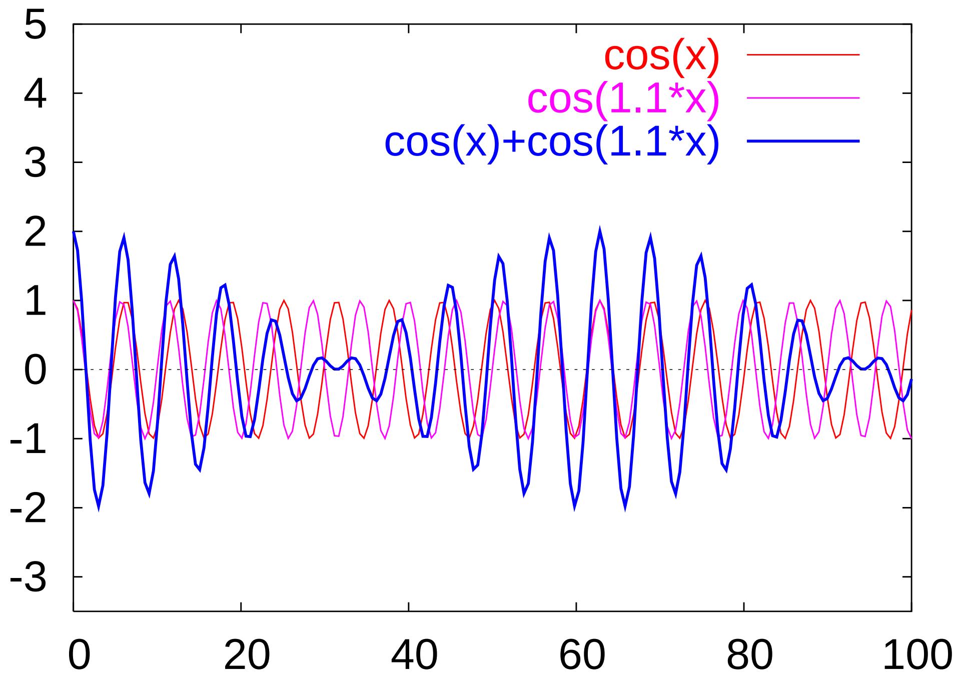
Phase moves faster than light!

- not really a problem
- phase carries no information

Transmitting a signal requires "modulation"

- like AM or FM radio
- mix nearby frequencies

$$\psi = \cos(kx - \omega t) + \cos(k'x - \omega' t)$$



Waves form "packets"

- concentrated where components "in phase"
- $kx - \omega t = k'x - \omega' t$
- $x = \frac{\omega - \omega'}{k - k'} t$
  - $v_g = \frac{\omega - \omega'}{k - k'} = \frac{d\omega}{dk}$
- v_g = "group velocity"
- can differ from phase velocity: $v_p \neq v_g$

Our quantum mechanical case:

- $E = \sqrt{p^2c^2 + m^2c^4}$
- $\omega = \sqrt{c^2k^2 + m^2c^4/\hbar^2}$

$$v_g = \frac{d\omega}{dk} = \frac{c^2k}{\omega} = \frac{pc^2}{E} = v$$

$\boxed{\text{Particles are wave packets!!}}$

(demo)

Note on units

$$
\begin{aligned}
c &= 186,000 \text{ miles/sec} \\
&= 3 \times 10^{10} \text{ cm/sec} \\
&= 1 \text{ foot/nanosec}
\end{aligned}
$$

- constants c,$\hbar, \ldots$ depend on units of measure
- can make $c = 1$, i.e. feet per nanosecond
- reset lengths allows $\hbar = 1$

Particle physicists love to do this

- to keep formulas simple
- $\frac{E}{\hbar} = \omega = \sqrt{c^2 k^2 + m^2 c^4 / \hbar^2}$
  - becomes $E = \omega = \sqrt{k^2 + m^2}$

Could set, say, proton mass to 1

- not usually done;
- why the proton and not the electron?

Water Waves

$v_p \neq v_g$ occurs often, including with water

My favorite example of dimensional analysis

v_p might be a function of several things

- λ, wavelength; units of length: L
- g, pull of gravity; units of acceleration: L/T^2
- ρ, density; units of mass per volume: M/L^3

From these construct a velocity

- with units of length per time, L/T

only one combination has the right units

- $L/T = \sqrt{L \times L/T^2}$
    - $v_p \sim \sqrt{\lambda g}$

Explicit solution of $F = ma$ gives

- $v_p = \sqrt{\frac{\lambda g}{2\pi}} = \sqrt{\frac{g}{k}}$

Velocity has NO dependence on density

- same speed for mercury and water waves

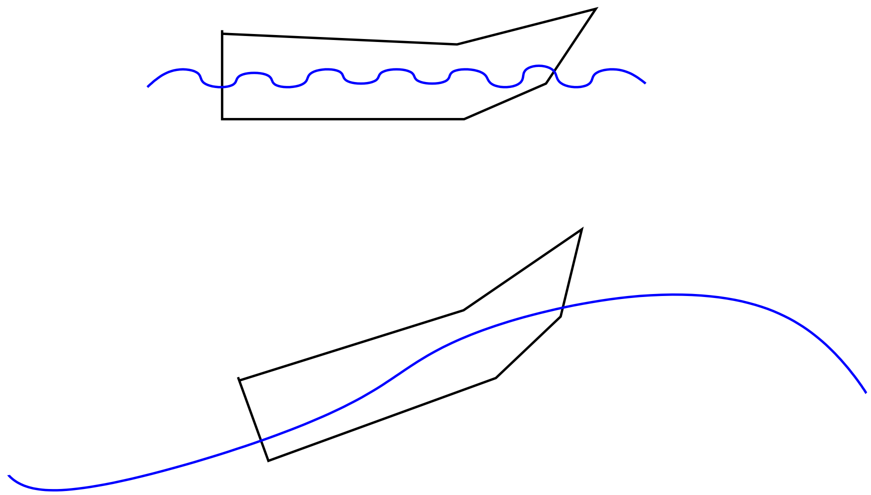
Long wavelengths go faster

- tsunami's can go hundreds of miles per hour

Waves on the moon would go slower

- gravity is less

Boats have a natural "hull speed" $v_h \sim \sqrt{L}$



- short waves no problem
- at wavelength near boat length, going uphill
  - keep feeding energy into the wave
- a big hole just before breaking into a plane
- longer boats go faster $\sim \sqrt{L}$

Physics Today, Feb. 2008

Now calculate the group velocity

- $v_p = \sqrt{\frac{g}{k}} = \frac{\omega}{k}$
- $\omega = \sqrt{gk}$
- $v_g = \frac{d\omega}{dk} = \frac{1}{2}\sqrt{\frac{g}{k}}$
    - $v_g = \frac{1}{2}v_p$

Packets have half the speed of the wavelets

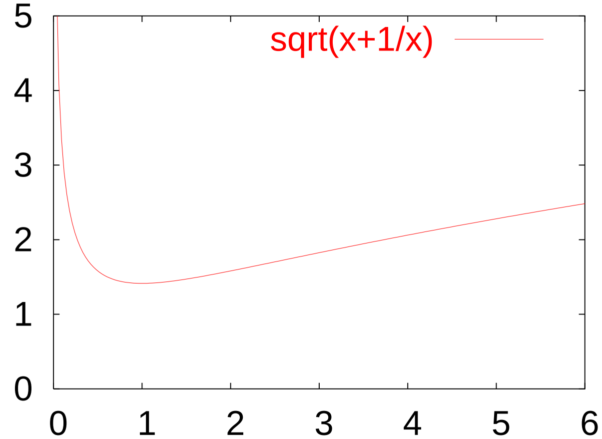
- ripples on a pond
- surf sets at the beach

(demo)

Correction for very short waves

- surface tension comes into play, $S \sim M/T^2$
- dimensional analysis gives $v_p \sim \sqrt{\frac{S}{\lambda\rho}}$
- $v_g = \frac{3}{2} v_p$

Very short waves go faster



Water waves have a minimum velocity

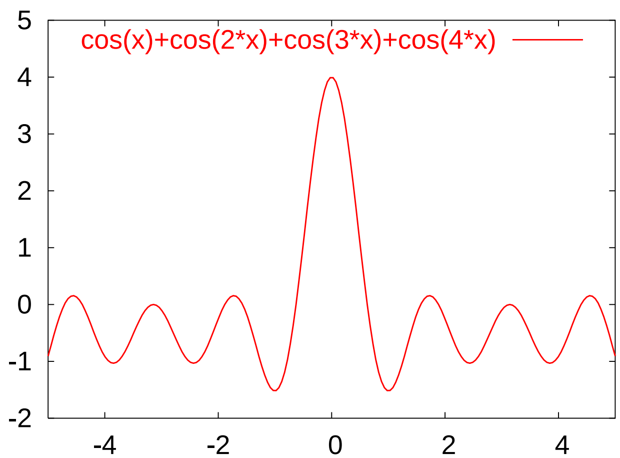
- $v_{min} = 23.1$ cm/sec $\sim .5$ mile/hr
- wind below this speed cannot drive ripples
- this is when water goes "glassy"

Back to quantum mechanics

$$\omega = \sqrt{k^2 + m^2}$$

Continue to combine many waves

$$\psi = \cos(kx) + \cos(2kx) + \cos(3kx) + \cos(4kx) + \ldots$$



- all terms in phase at $x = 0$
- packets get very peaked

This is how you localize a quantum particle

- combine many wavelengths
- combine many momenta
- one momentum is not localized at all

This is the famous “uncertainty principle”

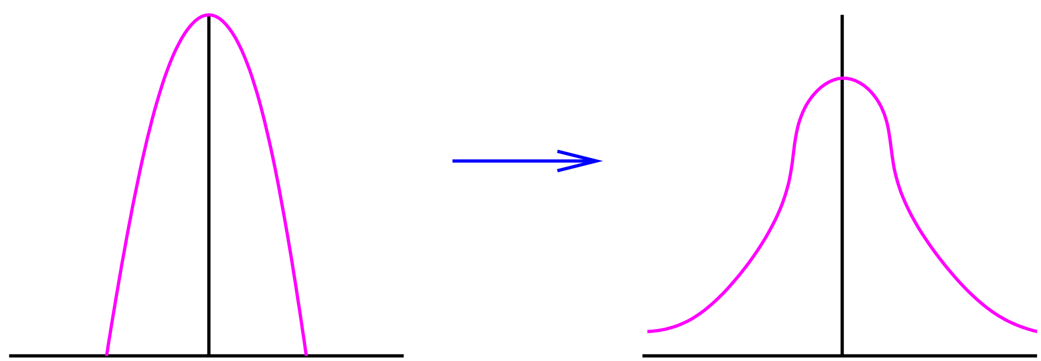
- $$\Delta p \; \Delta x \geq \hbar$$ $$\Delta E \; \Delta t \geq \hbar$$

Isolate a particle and let some time pass

$$\psi = \sum \cos\left(nkx - \omega(nk)\ t\right)$$

The ω term messes up the coherence of the waves

- the wave packet will spread out



(demo)

Herein lies the rub

- tail immediately spreads to all distances
- small but finite probability to go to $x > ct$
- conflicts with $v < c$

Put electron at x_1, look for it at x_2

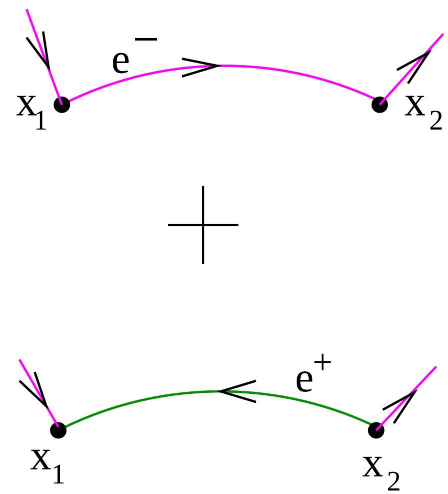
- should not see it for distances larger than ct

Dirac solved the problem using antimatter

- every particle has an antiparticle
- same mass
- opposite charge

Particle-antiparticle pair annihilation to energy

Particle-antiparticle pair creation from energy



Solves problem by creating confusion

- did the electron at x_2 really come from x_1
- or was it part of an e^+e^- pair
- positron then annihilates the electron from x_1

No information gets transferred!

An antiparticle is a particle going backwards in time

Mathematically

Construct "operator" $\psi^\dagger(x_1)$

- creates electron at x_1

Operator $\psi(x_2)$

- destroys electron at x_2

If a message cannot get between the points

- order of events should not matter

$$\psi(x_2)\psi^\dagger(x_1) \;=\; \pm\, \psi^\dagger(x_1)\psi(x_2)$$

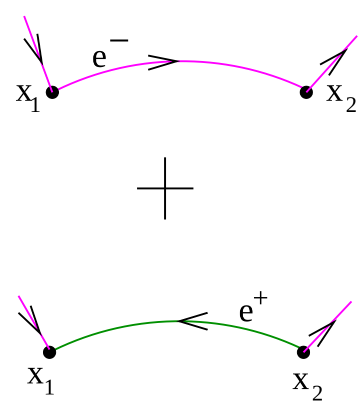
sign ambiguity since only $|\psi|^2$ matters

- electrons use minus sign; pions plus (spin statistics relation)

$$\psi(x_2)\psi^\dagger(x_1) \ = \ \pm\ \psi^\dagger(x_1)\psi(x_2)$$

Only possible if

- $\psi^\dagger(x_1)$ can also destroy a positron
- $\psi(x_2)$ can also create a positron



Closing paradox

Particle physicists bash things together

- study products for clues of composition
- a possible reaction:

$$e^- + e^- \to e^- + e^- + e^+ + e^-$$

Is the electron a component of itself??

These slides:

- http://thy.phy.bnl.gov/∼creutz/slides/antimatter/antimatter.pdf

A nice discussion of waves (including water):

- The Feynman Lectures on Physics, Vol. 1, chapter 51

My wave program and some other toys (for the X Window System):

- http://thy.phy.bnl.gov/www/xtoys/xtoys.html